

THE BEACON

FOR SCHOOL AND HOME

VOLUME XVII. No. 12.

THE BEACON PRESS, INC., BOSTON, MASS.

DECEMBER 19, 1926

The Girl Who Found Christmas

By Daisy D. Stephenson

PART TWO



"Anne! O A-a-anne! There's sleigh bells! Hear 'em!"

JOLLY JACK TAR — Tarbell originally — was at the station with an asthmatic car and face like a full moon. Mrs. Jack had the dear old house among the pines adjoining, and from the minute Anne crossed the threshold it was as if Hill-gaven folded tender, con-rolling arms about her. The pantry, redolent of goodies, drew Ginger, and after that, the big red barn with its new crop of cunning little collies. By dusk Anne had toured the village and renewed old friendships, returning in a glow of goodwill. Ginger had great news to impart. Accompanied by Jack Tar she had driven old Doll and the little wagon her own self, up the road into the woods. The tree of her choice bowered the back porch and after supper Jack hammered away at a standard while his wife and Anne conferred over Christmas menu and guests. Anne had first invited the lonely "singles" to whom her mother had always been a Christmas fairy. "Uncle Larry Burr said he hadn't had a regular Christmas since we moved away," reported Anne, with the inward satisfaction of having made others happy. Uncle Larry was an old pros-pector in summer, coming down to the valley with the first snow and working at odd jobs till spring lured him back up the trail where, some day, he knew he would strike it rich. "And Miss Evelina said she'd been living through holidays on the good times we used to give her at our house. And she looks thin and white as if she

hadn't had a real square meal since that last lovely dinner here three years ago," declared Anne with misty eyes. Mrs. Jack's round pink face was sober as she chopped citron and fat raisins. "I reckon sometimes she 'most lives on bird seed along with her canary. We have to watch out and not step on her pride. What about the old Jennifer twins?"

"The dear old giants! Yes, I saw them and you never saw folks so pleased. Tommy's going to bring his mouth harp and Timmy his banjo, so with Uncle Larry's fiddle we'll have a regular orchestra." "I guess the Jennifers asked all about your dad and the boys." "Yes, they were 'plum put out' about it. Tommy's afraid good luck has turned dad's mind away from his old friends. And I could see it hurt a lot because Ralph wasn't coming. The twins feel as if Ralph were part theirs. He was always at their heels. Tommy remembered making Ralph his first sled, and Timmy always kept him supplied with puppies. O Mrs. Jack, that's going to be a wonderful pudding!" "I'm doing my best," Mrs. Jack assured her proudly. "And my mince-meat turned out so well I'm making a batch of pies." "That's what Lee raves about," Anne told her. "Calls you the Pie Queen." There was to be a community entertainment in the little church on Christmas Eve and both Anne and Ginger were quickly mobilized for the program. With the five Garvers removed from public life temporarily by whooping cough, the teacher in charge hailed the Larimer girls almost with tears of gratitude. Finding that pretty Miss Vernon was not going to the city for the holidays Anne promptly added her to the guest list for Christmas dinner and reported to Mrs. Jack that busy day before, "Now, there're ten of us. And the rest will drop

in along in the afternoon. Open House — that's what mother enjoyed. And we'll have a bushel of iced cookies and gallons of fruit punch and tea. And a big fire and music and games. How daddy would enjoy it!"

Deep down she hid a growing hurt. No word yet from Oklahoma. Perhaps something had come for her and nobody at home had bothered to forward it. They would be gone now, scattered in four directions.

Ginger was beside herself with pride in the tree she had chosen and she and Anne had trimmed lavishly. It stood in the alcove, a dazzling vision from fairyland in a shimmering silver mist, tinkling baubles and red, green and gold candles. It was quite perfect, from the great star trembling at its tip to the lichen-crusted rocks piled about its foot. "just like it was growing right out of the mountain," Ginger declared gleefully.

Dressed for the entertainment Anne ran downstairs as supper was called. Jack Tar had driven down to the store for something and Anne heard the car wheeze and cough in front. She saw that it was snowing in earnest as she peered out to see two shadowy figures detach themselves from the evergreens and stamp up the steps. Ginger fairly rolled down the stairs, new red dress, puppy and all, at Anne's ecstatic squeal, "Lee Larimer! O Lee!" And such a reception as took place while Jack Tar at the top of his lungs related how "dumswiddled" he was when, on driving to the station for some express packages, he saw Lee hop off the five-fifty.

Gaily Mrs. Jack put on another plate while Lee told how Skip's plans had "busted up" on account of his grandpa's gout. "And the more I thought of you girls coming up here — well," Lee grinned sheepishly, "it seemed like a good idea. Anyhow, excuse me from batching on Christmas in that family-tomb. So I just beat it for Hillhaven." His roving eye fell on a perfect specimen of a mince pie, oozing lusciousness under Mrs. Jack's knife. "And I'll say I had the right hunch!" ended Lee hungrily.

"Did Willa and Ralph get away?" inquired Anne, moderating her transports sufficiently to usher Lee to his place.

"So far as I know. Haven't seen 'em for a couple of days. Willa was moving over to Patty's and Ralph was planning where he'd put his coyote or bobcat skins." It was after supper when they were alone by the great cheery fireplace a minute that Lee confided with traces of acute embarrassment, "You know the Scoutmaster set me to thinking. He's got a mighty high opinion of you, sis, since you helped us put over that party in the fall. He just remarked that sometimes we could learn lessons from the despised and lowly mule. 'You can't make a mistake if you copy the mule in one respect,' he said.

The One Thing Needful

By JOHN RICHARD MORELAND

You cannot see
The Christmas star
In all the sky's
Blue diadem,
Nor find the manger
Though you go
To that old town
Of Bethlehem.

You cannot hear
The angel's song
In quiet field
Or teasing mart,
Nor see the new-born
Infant Christ,
*Till love is born
Within your heart!*

'When a mule's kicking he can't pull, and when he's pulling he can't kick. So, fellows, let's pull.' Sort of struck me," Lee cleared his throat and fidgeted after his long speech, "that it would be a good idea for our family."

Christmas came in a swirl of dazzling white. Hillhaven was a place of beauty outside and a hive of activity within. Floating from Mrs. Jack's realm came an irresistible mixture of odors that combine to make Christmas morning — turkey and fresh bread, mingled with burning pine knots and perfumed evergreen.

Ginger, having "Merry Christmased" everybody within hearing, donned boots and waded out to bear Christmas cheer to the stable tenants. Anne set and decorated the long table, putting heart and soul into the rite until Lee voted it "too spiffy to spoil," and suggested feeding the gang in the kitchen. A miniature tree glittered in the center of the snowy expanse, flanked by gay colored candies and a riot of red-berried greenery. Tall red candles rose from silver candlesticks, ropes and garlands of spruce worked wood magic to transform the place into a fragrant bower where, any moment, a rabbit or even a deer might go skipping through.

"Mother used to seat sixteen," recalled Anne, fluttering around for another tour of anxious inspection. "I wish I'd asked that new family down by the mill. I could easily put in another leaf —"

"Anne! O A-a-anne!" shrieked Ginger, bursting in at the door like a snow-child. "There's sleigh bells! Hear 'em!" She flitted to the living-room window with further shrieks of delight, but Anne was helping baste the beautifully browning turkey. So what with the noise of the hissing and the racket of Lee's dumping stove wood in the box, Anne's mind was not on sleigh bells. Then Ginger flung open the dining-room door and there stood a rosy, uncertain, but altogether lovely — Willa!

Anne stared but came to life at burn-

ing her fingertips on the roaster. "How — where did you come from?" she asked dazedly, fearful the vision would fade.

Willa, rather fussed, took shelter in Mrs. Jack's arms.

"I — I — Oh, it's so homey and nice! You don't mind my coming so late?" she pleaded. Then as Anne surrounded her in a blue-checked embrace she explained.

"I did start up to Patty's place and got as far as the Junction. Pat's two cousins from Utah had bobbed up unexpectedly and I knew there wasn't really room, and besides — I got to feeling that Christmas isn't much without your family. And I guess I was plain homesick for Hillhaven and didn't know it before!"

"Bless her heart!" murmured Mrs. Jack, adding, "Lucky I made a raft of strawberry tarts you're so partial to, so I must have had a hunch. And you can whip the cream yourself, Willa, dear."

Anne skipped in to set another place. For a second her blue eyes stared dreamily into space. "It couldn't possibly happen. It simply couldn't. But oh, wouldn't it be the best Christmas gift I ever had if only it *would!*" Which was, to say the least, cryptic.

The guests arrived, flatteringly punctual. Lee was out shoveling paths, zodiac-fashion, and caroling tunelessly:

"Who put the angle-worm in Mrs. Murphy's chowder?

Nobody answers so I'll ask a little louder —

Who put the —" etc. (More and more crescendo.)

The gray-bearded Jennifer twins, Tommy and Timmy, were just tuning up for a little music while the women folks took up dinner when Anne's "best Christmas" gift happened. A big car plowed through the soft drifts, scooted up the driveway and drew up with a contented purr at Hillhaven's hospitable portals. The twins never did finish that tune.

Uncle Larry's eyes fairly popped out — he was facing the front door — and his voice cracked as he rose up excitedly. "Well, I yum! If it ain't Jim Larimer! Jim and Ralph. Howdy, boys!"

"Thought we'd surprise the folks," dad Larimer remarked as he shook hands all round, Ginger squealing rapturously from his shoulder. Ralph made a bee line for the kitchen, and Anne, so happy her eyes were bright as Christmas candles and stars together, heard how dad's telegram to her had come after the rest had gone.

"I was feeling sort of like a deserter anyway, letting you and Ginger come off alone," confessed a very humble big boy. "So I let another guy go hunting in my place, and I waited for dad. Tried to catch Lee but he'd vamoosed and I supposed he was skiing on Gold Hill by now.

(Continued on page 53)

Karl Beck and the Dwarfs

By Arthur Lee

IN the city of Thermond, the most skilful goldsmith and one of the richest men was Karl Beck. No craftsman of Thermond or of any other city in the country could make such rare and beautiful articles of gold or silver as he. Karl Beck was an old man with a long white beard, grave and silent but kind and courteous. He lived in a cottage with two servants, a man and his wife who had been with him two score years, and he had few visitors. For all his wealth and charity and courteous manners there was something a little strange about the goldsmith, and no one knew him really well. He played the flute better than anyone else in Thermond, but his music, most of which seemed to be of his own composition, was thought a bit weird and fantastic.

Karl Beck gave much money to the poor; and every year at Christmas time he had his servants fill baskets with everything suitable for a Christmas dinner, — loaves of crusty bread, geese, sausages, mince pies, plum puddings, oranges, figs, and nuts. These he sent to poor folk who else would have had little on Christmas day. And when he died, he left his fortune to found a home and school where poor boys could live comfortably and be taught a trade.

There grew up a legend about Karl Beck, which is told in Thermond to this day. Thermond is old, and they like to tell stories there of by-gone days, and the stories themselves are old, old tales. And this is the legend they tell in old Thermond of Karl Beck.

Karl Beck was a very poor boy. No boy was ever poorer, for Karl had no parents or any kin, no home, no friends, no money, nothing at all. After his parents died, he lived for a while with his old grandfather; and when the grandfather died, Karl wandered in the streets and in the woods and fields, worked when he could, begged when he must, and slept in haystacks, barns, or sheds. Mostly he slept in an old box behind the church of St. Giles. The graveyard was on that side, and people never came there after night. Karl packed the box half full of straw and slept undisturbed.

In summer when Karl could get nothing to do, he went and spent whole days and sometimes several days and nights at a time in the forest. If he had earned a few pennies, he took with him a loaf of stale bread which the baker let him have cheap. Often he found berries or wild plums and haws and sometimes caught a few fish and made a fire and cooked them as best he could.

Late one evening when he had spent the day in the woods and was looking round for some place to sleep, he was surprised to see a door open in the side of a hill and seven little men come out



REINDEER RURAL DELIVERY,
NORTH POLE.

Dear Young Friend:

I'm really coming,
I'm already on the way.
It will keep my reindeer humming
To reach you on Christmas Day.
I have filled a hundred pouches
Packed right now within my sleigh.
There has been no time for grouches,
For I've been busy night and day.
Then, I keep a huge card index
Of the children who are good —
Yes, I find your name among them,
You're all right, I've understood.
So I'm sending you my portrait,
Just in case I can not wait
If you happen to be sleeping;
For I may be very late.

Will you have a Happy Christmas?
Will my wish for you come true?
Well, my dear, I've done what I could,
And the rest is up to you!

SANTA CLAUS.

with picks on their shoulders and carrying empty sacks. When they had disappeared in the forest, he ran to the door, which was a flat stone laid against the sloping side of the hill, and tried to open it. At first he thought that it was too heavy for him to lift, but pulling and tugging he finally got it open and went inside. He stood in a narrow passage, the roof of which — though he was not a large boy — almost touched his head. Looking down the passage he saw a light in the distance and walked toward it. The passage opened into a room where a long low table was set, at which people seemed to have been having supper. Candles burned on the table.

Karl was hungry, but he had never touched without permission anything that belonged to others. Though the bread and honey and joint of meat made his mouth water, he waited to see if

some one would come in from whom he might ask a little food.

No one came, and presently Karl saw a door which was closed. He opened it and passed into a room very neat and clean where there were a number of beds and a table in the center with a lighted candle on it. At the end of this room was another door; he opened it and passed into a third room which was large and had a high ceiling. In this room were several little furnaces, in some of which charcoal was still glowing. There were work benches all round the walls with many little tools lying on them, tiny anvils and hammers, knives, pliers, and other things that Karl didn't know the names of.

In one corner of the room Karl saw heaps of ore and in another bars of yellow metal in piles and other piles of white metal. There were shelves round the walls and on them the most beautiful things that Karl had ever seen, rings, pins, bracelets, chains, vases and pitchers, plates, knives, forks, spoons, crowns, and little statuettes, all made of gold or silver.

He was gazing with open mouth at all this wealth and magnificence when he heard the door open behind him. A little old man came in with a sack of charcoal on his back. He threw the sack on the floor and stood looking gravely at Karl. After some time he asked,

"What are you doing here?"

Now Karl, who was very hungry, thought more about the bread and meat in the first room than all the gold and silver in the workshop, and said at once,

"Please, sir, I am hungry. Will you give me something to eat?"

The Dwarf led the boy back to the dining room and seated him at the table and gave him all he could eat of meat and bread and honey. When Karl had eaten his fill, the Dwarf led him to a room that he had not yet seen, with seats along the wall and many kinds of musical instruments lying about. Without saying a word the Dwarf took up a flute and began to play. The music was wild and strange but very lovely. Karl loved music and thought that he could listen to this forever; but he was tired and had eaten heartily, and when the music grew soft with a sound of humming bees and waterfalls and rain upon leafy woods, the boy fell asleep.

When he awoke the room was full of little Dwarfs. They all had beards, big noses, and large solemn eyes. They wore leather jackets and breeches, and most of them had on red shoes and stockings. All wore gold buckles on their shoes, gold chains about their necks, and silver cords round their hats.

The oldest of the Dwarfs questioned Karl as to how he came to be in their quarters, and Karl told him. The old Dwarf asked who his parents were and where he lived, and Karl told him that

his parents were dead, that he slept in an old box behind the church of St. Giles in Thermond and that he lived the best he could.

When they heard his story, the Dwarfs looked more kindly at him. When he finished, they were all silent for a long time, and then at last the oldest Dwarf spoke.

"There is nothing to do but keep him here with us. He knows where we live, and he has seen our treasure. If we let him go, he will tell of it, and all the world will come to this wood and search and dig for our treasure; and though they will never find it, they will make us much trouble."

All the Dwarfs gravely nodded their heads. Karl did not like the idea of living underground with the Dwarfs, but he was relieved to know that nothing worse was to befall him. Besides, his way of life was not so pleasant that he had much to lose by changing it, especially since there was so much good food here.

When the oldest Dwarf saw that his people were willing to keep the lad, he called the first Dwarf that Karl had seen, who was the cook and housekeeper, and told him that Karl was to help him cook, wash dishes, and fetch charcoal.

Then all the Dwarfs went in to breakfast, and Karl and the cook waited on them. When all had eaten, the cook sat down to breakfast, and Karl waited on him. Last Karl ate his breakfast and waited on himself. The other Dwarfs went to work in the shop, and Karl helped the cook wash the dishes and put the meat in the pot for dinner and knead the bread and set it to rise.

So things went on for several days. Every day Karl went with the cook to the charcoal pit in the woods where the Dwarfs burned wood and made charcoal for their furnaces. Every evening after supper the Dwarfs gathered in the hall and made music upon all kinds of instruments, flutes, harps, viols, and lutes. There was something weird and unearthly about their music, but Karl liked it and after his work was done the evening was a happy time for him.

He did not have to work all the time bringing charcoal or turning the spit or washing pots and kettles, and when he had nothing to do for a while, he would ask permission of the cook to go to the shop and watch the Dwarfs fashion their gold and silver. Sometimes a Dwarf would call Karl to fetch a tool or a piece of metal or set him to watch gold or silver that was softening over the fire. Karl was so willing and so eager to learn that before long he became a useful helper in the workshop.

Every day he learned something new, and soon he could make a few simple things like buttons, and then more difficult things, spoons, plates, rings, and chains. The work was interesting, and he was content to stay with the Dwarfs

in their warm neat quarters where there was plenty of good food and rare music and beautiful objects. The Dwarfs talked little and were never very merry, but all of them were kind to him.

One day he stood in the hall looking at a flute and wishing that he might play it. A Dwarf passed through the hall, and seeing that the boy looked longingly at the flute, put it in his hand and said, "Play."

Karl took it and tried but did poorly. The Dwarf then showed him how to use his fingers on the stops and make tones. Afterwards the Dwarf taught him often, and Karl learned to play fairly well for a beginner. All the time when he was not helping the cook or working in the shop he practiced on the flute.

When he had been with them a year, the Dwarfs gave him a fine suit of soft leather and red shoes and stockings. When he had been with them two years, they gave him a silver flute of his own.

Karl lived with the Dwarfs seven years. By that time he had grown to be a large boy, almost a man. At the end of the seven years when they were all sitting round the hall one night, the Dwarfs stopped playing, and the oldest said,

"Karl, you have been with us seven years to-morrow. You have served us well, and we have served you well, for we have taught you our art so that you are now a good workman in precious metals. We have taught you to play the flute so that all your life you may play

it and be happy. You are not a Dwarf, and therefore, you cannot stay with us longer. You must go out into the world and never come here again. Work hard as you have been taught to do, and you will be a rich man. We have helped you. Do you help others."

Karl was sad and the tears stood in his eyes, for he did not want to leave the Dwarfs and go out into the world. But all the Dwarfs said that it must be so.

The next morning the oldest of the Dwarfs said,

"You have lived with us so long that all your life you will be thought a little strange, but work at your trade and play your flute and it will go well with you."

They each gave him a little present, a lump of gold or silver, a ring or a chain. The cook gave him a wallet of food and the oldest Dwarf gave him a bag of goldsmith's tools. Tears rolled down Karl's cheeks. Then every Dwarf took up an instrument and began to play. They played moonlight, and gentle breezes, and whispering leaves, and rushing waters, and restful beds for tired limbs, and Karl fell asleep.

When he awoke he was lying on a grassy bank. He sat up and looked round. He was well but plainly dressed. He felt in his pockets and found lumps of gold and silver, a ring, a chain, and other articles that goldsmiths make. By his side was a leather wallet filled with food and stuck in his belt was his flute.

He got up and went to Thermond.

The Stairway in the Cliff

By Mabel S. Merrill

CHAPTER EIGHT

AS they were eating the early breakfast that Isabel had prepared in the kitchen Mrs. Strong looked in to say that the repairs about the house were all done, but that she should stay around to see that nothing got mussed up before Mr. and Mrs. Tracy arrived. Isabel explained to her that they were going off for the day with Alan Hunter and she looked relieved and said it was a good idea.

Alan was waiting for them in the road at nine o'clock and his little car made short work of that twenty miles to Oldwood. They stopped first at Alan's house, a pretty, homelike dwelling overlooking the shady campus. Here they learned something that startled them a little. Alan's father was president of the college. But, as Isabel said afterwards, what did that matter when he turned out to be a jolly big man whom they felt at home with in five minutes?

In the forenoon they visited the museum and Luke was so fascinated with the big glass aquarium reaching from floor to ceiling that they could hardly get him away from it. He just wanted to

stand and gaze at the lively fishes of all kinds and colors swimming about far above his head in the sunlight that fell through the great tank from an opposite window. The others liked the aquarium too, but there were so many things to see that they had to keep moving. Alan and Peter were interested in the stuffed birds and animals and the two girls found dozens of things to admire.

They went back to President Hunter's pretty home for luncheon and Alan's mother made them feel that they were welcome guests who were expected to come again.

After luncheon Alan hurried them away to a certain lecture-room where he said the head of the department of biology was to speak on birds. Dr. Weaver (that was his name) was especially interested in birds and was to show some new slides this afternoon. They wondered why Alan's eyes twinkled a little as he explained this, but they were soon to know.

As they entered the hall the professor, or Doctor, as Alan had called him, was standing on the platform ready to begin

his lecture. He was dressed in a neat dark suit and shiny shoes in place of the muddy khaki and sodden footgear they had seen him wear, but he was the very man whom they had at first called the pirate and later Uncle Hugh.

"Yes, he really is my uncle," Alan said in answer to Peter's question. "He spends all his spare time tramping around in swamps and pastures studying the ways of the birds and wild animals. But it is only lately that he has begun going over around your neighborhood, so nobody knows him by sight in that part of the country."

They slipped into the seats that Dr. Weaver himself had reserved for them and then the lights went off in the room which had been darkened for showing pictures.

Peter choked back a quick exclamation as the first one flashed on the screen. It was his own white heron, many times enlarged and standing life-size at the top of that towering pine. There followed all the other pictures of the big bird and then came scenes that Dr. Weaver had taken himself over around the Tracy farm. There was one of their own house with pigeons sitting on the roof, and there was one of the hooded boat going away down river. Luke laughed aloud at a picture of Skip, the little black dog, facing the big rooster in the Captain's barnyard. Alan himself had snapped that one.

There were many other interesting scenes of bird and animal life and it was even more interesting to hear Dr. Weaver tell of his adventures in getting the pictures.

He was waiting to shake hands with them after the lecture and to tell Peter that he had already interviewed the editor of a certain bird magazine about those heron pictures and that they would be out next month with a descriptive article written by himself.

"I gave the editor your name and address," said the doctor, "and you will get your check very soon. If you can get any more animal or bird pictures as fine as those I shall be able to dispose of them for you."

Peter's eyes shone when, that very evening, he got that check at the village post office. It was a generous one and seemed to point the way to something the boy had been longing to do — earn a bit of money to help his father through the hard time of his sickness. Peter dreamed golden dreams as they walked home through the dark.

They found the Bird's Nest still closed and Skip keeping watch on the doorstep till the Captain and his wife should get home. So the Tracys went on to their own house.

Isabel sighed a little as they came up to it. "I hope Mrs. Strong won't be quite so crusty as usual. After spending such a lovely day with people who are nice to

T
H
E
C
A
N
D
L
E
,
,
,
I
am
just
a tiny
bit
of
light and all
that I can do
is make one
little corner
bright. Yet if I
do not shine
the blame for
one dark corner
will be
mine. So while
I live I'm
simply going
to plan to
shine forth
just as brightly as I can, and
possibly the tiny ray I send will shine
into the heart of some good friend
and say, "My dear, I'm
sending to you love and
CHRISTMAS CHEER!"

ANN FULLER.

you and seem to like having you around, it is pretty hard to come home to a place where you're not wanted."

Then she gave a gasp, for the front door of the farmhouse had opened, letting out a flood of light into the dark dooryard. In that radiance a lady stood smiling at them, her arms wide open.

With a shout of "Mother!" they rushed at her and when they had made sure that she was real they trooped in and found their father sitting, pale but cheerful, in his armchair near the dainty supper table. The house was beautifully clean, all the rooms were open and lighted and Mrs. Strong had vanished as if she had never been.

Luke spoke in hushed tones as he gazed about. "Well, we've got a home after all, and it's come right out of the air, as you might say."

They had one more beautiful surprise during the next few days. One day at sunset Grandma Ferris asked them to go down on the steps by the water and see how pretty it looked with the rosy glow over everything. She went with them herself and smiled mysteriously as something came gliding around the bend of the river below them. It was a beautiful little houseboat, and on the deck stood

Captain Ferris with Alan and Uncle Hugh and a few other friends.

"I made up my mind I could afford one luxury since I came into possession of that leather bag," the Captain said, "and naturally it turned out to be a boat. 'The Sandpiper' is her name and she'll carry us all on many a bird-spying expedition down this coast. We'll start off whenever you feel like it, young folks."

"I'm going to feel like it every morning as soon as I'm out of bed," declared Luke, and the Captain laughed and said, "Ay, ay, my hearty!"

If the Christ Came

BY HAROLD WILLARD GLEASON

I wonder, if the Christ should come
And wander through the busy street,
What man would kneel amid the hum
And worship at his sandaled feet;

What passer hail him — save to mock
His garments quaint, of unused lands;
What portal open at his knock;
What woman kiss his nail-scarred hands?

Yet if he sought the hillsides brown
Like those he trod so long ago,
Though none acclaimed him in the town,
The shepherds and their flocks would know.

The Girl Who Found Christmas

(Continued from page 50)

Of course, I knew Wil was at Blue Sky Lodge —" he twinkled at somebody vigorously whipping cream. "This surprise party seems to have two angles to it. My, but it's great to be back! Mrs. Jack, do I smell mince pie?"

Well, it was all as near perfect as it could be without mother. The best dinner any guest had partaken of for three years. The most beautiful, generous tree that ever bore a magic Christmas crop. Coasting and snow-balling outside. Old friends and neighbors dropping in, radiant with the spirit of the holiday. Carols, games.

Then at dusk — serenity, peace, firelight. Anne sat on a stool close to dad's dear, shabby old chair, Ginger drowsing in his lap. The rest were out in the kitchen or helping Jack Tar outdoors.

"I'm sorry it's nearly over," said Anne softly. "It has been like dreams come true. And to think you're going to stay with us, dad, forever after." Her voice was tremulous.

"And we're coming back every summer," yawned Ginger; "and I can have a pony and plenty of kitties and puppies. And baby chickens — and things."

Dad Larimer's free hand rested caressingly on Anne's gleaming curls, haloed by the firelight.

"It's up to us, Anne," he said humbly, "to take over mother's job. We must keep the family together."

"And me," added Ginger sleepily.



THE CROW'S NEST

BY
WAITSTILL
HASTINGS
SHARP

Shipmates Ahoy:

Christmas Sunday! It seems hard to believe it — on December 19th. But I wonder if Christmas Sunday's coming on December 19th — six days before the happy 25th — should really have anything to do with the spirit of Christmas Sunday. Of course it shouldn't! Why, there can be the real joy of Christmas in a May basket, and of course on May 1st there isn't the chance of snow, and the stars aren't twinkling against the cold blue sky, and the ground isn't frozen, and the air isn't keen and bracing.

All those in favor of voting that we can celebrate Christmas Sunday on December 19th say, "AYE!"

The "AYES" have it! I didn't hear the whisper of a "NAY!"

If I were to ask you these two questions what would you answer:

1. When in the course of the long year is this old world of ours feeling happiest through and through?

2. When are you happiest? What do you like best to do?

I might have written a Christmas message to all of my readers and might have told them of what Christmas means to me as I look out from the Crow's Nest — just as a sailor 'way up in the crow's nest shouts down to the captain what he sees off on the horizon line. I say that I might have written you a Christmas message — but your minister, and your teachers, and best of all your father and mother can do that much better than I. And besides:

I WANT A CHRISTMAS PRESENT!

Yes, I am twenty-four and still looking for Christmas presents — ten thousand of them, I hope.

One good thing about this Christmas Sunday is that it comes on December 19th and I can tell you what I want.

It isn't a Kewpie; it isn't a handkerchief from the ten-cent store; it isn't a toy donkey with legs attached by elastic; it isn't a half-dozen pigeons, nor a goat, nor a collie pup, nor a football, nor skates, nor an air rifle.

It costs only two cents and about fifteen minutes. It IS a letter from YOU. I would rather have Santa bring me ten thousand letters than anything else in the

world — and that means ten thousand letters from the boys and girls who are following these Crow's Nest observations. How would you like to write thirty-six letters to folks who never answered you? All I ask is *one Christmas letter* from the boys and girls who read this Crow's Nest talk. They would come from California and Maine, from Winnipeg in frozen Canada to New Orleans in sunny Louisiana. Won't you sit right down with your pen and ink and obey that impulse?

I wish you would tell me how old you are; and what you like to study in your public school and in your Church School; what your hobbies are — guinea pigs, or Welsh rarebits, or manual training; and then answer the two questions which I asked in the front of this letter. You see, if you write me about these things I can know just who is "on deck" when I go up into the Crow's Nest to take an observation — I can make these talks better if I know who reads them. And I shall try to answer the letters, but if I am terribly busy and cannot answer right away, just remember that I am wishing you the merriest of Merry Christmases, and that I am

Gratefully yours,

WAITSTILL H. SHARP.

16 Beacon St., Boston, Mass.



THE BOOKSHELF

New books suggested by Elsie L. Lustig.

[Miss Lustig will be glad to answer any questions you may wish to ask her about books. Address her in care of *The Beacon*.]

And now I must tell you about several books of poetry which I have been re-reading lately. Do you know A. A. Milne's poem about the Teddy Bear? It is contained in his popular volume *WHEN WE WERE VERY YOUNG*. The first stanza is as follows:

"A bear, however hard he tries,
Grows tubby without exercise.
Our Teddy Bear is short and fat,
Which is not to be wondered at;
He gets what exercise he can
By falling off the ottoman,
But generally seems to lack
The energy to clamber back."

Read this one, and read all the other poems. Even if you have read them many times, you will enjoy them all the more. I have, and I speak from pleasant experience.

In 1922 Sara Teasdale brought out a collection of "Poems Old and New, Selected for Boys and Girls." It is called *RAINBOW GOLD*, and almost every poem

in the book is worth treasuring. One of my favorites is by Fannie Stearns Gifford. At least, that was her name when she wrote the poem. Since then she has married and her name is now Fannie Stearns Gifford Davis. However, the poem is called *MOON FOLLY*, and it begins in this way:

"I will go up the mountain after the Moon;

She is caught in a dead fir-tree.

Like a great pale apple of silver and pearl,

Like a great pale apple is she."

One more bit about verse, and I'm through with poetry for this time. But I can't resist telling you about Langford Reed's *BOOK OF NONSENSE VERSE*. Some of these rhymes are his own, but most of them have been written by other people. You will have many laughs over "A Mathematical Madness," "Turtle Soup," "A Tragic Story," and others. As for the authors — it is surprising to notice that some of the best-known novelists have burst into humorous rhyme, as for instance William Makepeace Thackeray and Oliver Wendell Holmes. Of course, Lewis Carroll has always been known by his nonsense verses, quite a few of which appear in *ALICE IN WONDERLAND*. Glance through them again, and do read "Strictly Germ Proof" by Arthur Guiterman, one of our modern poets. You will chortle over it! And now for a last quotation — *THE HIPPOPOTAMUS* — by Hilaire Belloc. I will give you the entire poem, as it is not too long: —

"I shoot the Hippopotamus with bullets made of platinum,

Because if I use leaden ones his hide is sure to flatten 'em."

Do you like it?

Never too Late to Mend

BY MARJORIE DILLON

I've needle, thimble and some yarn,
And though it's late, I mean to darn.
To see this hole in brother's sock
Might give old Santa Claus a shock.

He couldn't fill it up at all,
For through the hole the gifts
would fall.

Of course, it doesn't worry Jim,
And so I'm looking after him.

A tidy sock, I nearly know,
Dear Santa'll stuff from top to toe.
Perhaps he's hard on socks — like
Jim —

And Mrs. Santa darns for him!

We love to buy presents
Then hide them away,
To surprise people with
On Christmas Day.

J. R. J.



The Favorite Toy

BY ELSA GORHAM BAKER

Two toys that hung on a Christmas tree
Were disagreeing. (Can such things be?)
A picture-book and a little horn —
Each one was sure that on Christmas
morn

It would prove to be the fav'rite toy
Of a two-year-old baby boy.
But O, alas for the horn and book!
When the baby got them he gave one look

At them each — one look and that was
all —

Then, reached both hands for a rubber
ball.

And he played and played for hours, I'm
told,

With that big red rubber ball that
bounced and rolled.

Fuzzy Tail's Christmas Tree

By Hermolion E. Perkins

WHEN Christmas comes every one
is happy. Fuzzy Tail was. Oh,
Fuzzy Tail was so happy she
hardly knew what to do with herself. She
was as happy as ever a squirrel could be.
She frisked from tree to tree and laughed
and chattered gayly.

Now Shiny Eyes liked Fuzzy Tail very,
very much. But Shiny Eyes was most un-
happy. So were all the other little Squir-
rels very, very unhappy.

"Miss Fuzzy Tail," asked Shiny Eyes
one day, "would you mind telling me why
you are so joyous while we are all so
downcast?"

"Mr. Shiny Eyes, you are going to be
just as happy as I am on Christmas
morning!" and that is all Fuzzy Tail
would say.

But Shiny Eyes just couldn't see how
he could possibly be as happy as Fuzzy

Tail. He couldn't see how he could be
happy at all. It was nearly Christmas
then. Nobody was one bit happy but
Fuzzy Tail.

And why were all the other little squir-
rels so unhappy?

The leaves had done their bit. They
had turned red, brown, and yellow and
covered the ground with a pretty carpet
for the squirrels to play on. And yet the
squirrels were not happy.

It was what the squirrels had stored
in their houses to eat that made them so
unhappy. Or, rather, what they did not
have stored in their houses. Squirrels
love nuts most of all. Nice, sweet, juicy
nuts. But all summer long the sun had
shone very hot. The pattering raindrops
had forgotten to fall at all. So the nut
trees had no nuts, and the little squirrels
had to fill their houses with acorns.

Now squirrels will never starve on
acorns. They are good food. But when
Christmas comes along, every one likes
something real nice. Something they
don't have every day. And the squirrels
had always had lots of nuts before. Now
they had none. Not even for Christmas.

It was acorns for Monday. Acorns
for Tuesday. Acorns for Wednesday.
And acorns for Christmas! That's why
all the little squirrels were so unhappy.

But Fuzzy Tail was not unhappy. She
was entirely too busy to be unhappy.
Every day, every day, she was gone
somewhere. No one seemed to know
where. Not even Shiny Eyes. So Shiny
Eyes was lonely and unhappy along with
the other little squirrels. One day he got
cross.

"Look here, Miss Fuzzy Tail, where
do you stay all the time?"

"Never you mind, Mr. Shiny Eyes!
And don't you dare to follow me either.
If you do, you'll be sorry. I shall be
busy until Christmas morning."

Finally, after a long, long time,
Christmas Eve came. Fuzzy Tail came
bounding home almost too happy for
words. She paused beneath the tree in
which she lived, sat up on her hind feet,
and gave the queerest little whistling trill-
call.

My! How those squirrels came scam-
pering pell-mell from all directions.

Fuzzy Tail frisked and flourished.

"Cheer up, friends," she said. "I have
come to invite you to my Christmas
tree! It shall be in the wee, small hours
of Christmas morning; far, far down the
creek bed."

"Ha! ha!" Shiny Eyes laughed. "So
this is what you've been doing? I shall
be the first to arrive!"

"No! no! no! I shall! I shall!" came
dozens of voices at once.

Oh, what a hurrying, scurrying, and
scampering there was in the wee, small
hours of Christmas morning! And what
a Christmas tree!

Fuzzy Tail had discovered a big pecan
tree growing quite near the water's edge,
and without the pattering rain it had
borne bushels of nice, fat, juicy nuts.
Instead of carrying them home and stor-
ing them away for herself alone, Fuzzy
Tail had made a Christmas tree for all
her unhappy little friends. How she had
worked all by herself, carrying the nuts,
one by one.

Such a beautiful Christmas tree Fuzzy
Tail had! All decorated with leaves, au-
tumn berries and mistletoe. And such
lovely gifts for every one. Enough and to
spare for all the hungry little squirrels.

Fuzzy Tail was so happy she hardly
knew what to do. She frisked around,
distributing her gifts, until she was sure
her guests were all happy. Then she sat
up on her hind feet with her pretty tail
arched, and began to peel a nut herself.

Suddenly the strangest thing happened.

(Continued on page 56)



THE BEACON CLUB

THE EDITOR'S POST BOX

65 GRANITE STREET,
QUINCY, MASS.

Dear Editor: I have been a member of the Beacon Club for about six years. I go to the Unitarian Church in Quincy, Mass. Today I happened to get a *Beacon* and saw the letter about stamp collecting. As I am an ardent stamp collector, I decided to write you. I regret to say that I am too old to come in on the prizes, but would like to make a suggestion. I am almost seventeen. I have been collecting stamps for some seven years and have approximately 4,000. I think that it is the most fascinating work that any one could do. If you could send me the names of some boy or girl stamp collectors between the ages of thirteen and seventeen I should appreciate it very much. I am sure that all boys and girls who collect stamps would be glad of such a column.

I don't get *The Beacon* every Sunday but when I do get it and have time to read it I thoroughly enjoy it.

Yours sincerely,

EDITH PAIGE.

FIRST PARISH ROAD,
EGYPT, MASS.

Dear Editor: I am a girl of ten. I go to the Unitarian Sunday School. Our minister is Rev. Cornelius Heyn. I am very fond of him. I should like to belong to the Beacon Club and wear its button. I would also like to receive some letters from girls of my age.

Yours sincerely,

LORAIN ABBOTT.

Other new members of our Club are Ruth Brooks, Sanford, Me.; Hazel Gangloff, Leslie Hutchinson, and Laurice Wheeler, Milford, N. H.; Jean Doremus, Schenectady, N. Y.; Betty Lasalle, Toledo, Ohio; Gertrude Spellmire, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Other new members in Massachusetts are: Charles E. Stearns, Billerica; Walter W. Warren, East Braintree; Elizabeth V. Abbott, Egypt; Mary Sherman and Margaret Crossman, Melrose; Emma F. Bourne, Milton; George Vinal, Scituate.

THE CUBS' COLUMN

Dear Cubs: Several "Aye-Ayes" have been received to the suggestion that we have a column about stamps, but as yet we have not received any article on the subject from any of our members. Will some of our collectors write to Miss Edith Paige, an old-time Beacon Club member, whose letter we are publishing?

We are especially grateful to Faith Crossman, of Melrose Highlands, Mass., for sending her charming little Christmas story in time for publication in the Christmas number.

A very Merry Christmas to all our readers!

THE BEACON CLUB EDITOR.

Christmas

BY FAITH CROSSMAN (AGE 11)

King Winter sat on his throne, talking to his fairies. "Tomorrow is Christmas," he said, "and Santa Claus will come tonight. You must cover the ground with snow for his reindeer. Please go at once and do so."

The fairies did as he bade them, and soon Santa Claus came in his sleigh with his packs on his back. He stopped at every house and left the presents. When it was light Santa went away and the snowflakes danced around windows, watching the happy children. They tried out their sleds and skates, and as the fairies watched them they were glad to know that they had had a part in making the children so merry.

Fuzzy Tail's Christmas Tree

(From preceding page)

Shiny Eyes skipped up and kissed Fuzzy Tail squarely in the mouth.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed all the squirrels. "Fuzzy Tail, Fuzzy Tail, who hung the mistletoe?"

Fuzzy Tail looked up, and sure enough she was sitting right beneath the biggest bunch of mistletoe.

"O Fuzzy Tail," Shiny Eyes cried, "I really am just as happy this Christmas morning as you are! Truly you have made us all happy with your lovely Christmas tree."

PUZZLERS

Enigma

I am composed of 22 letters.

My 7, 8, 9, 4, 14 is started.

My 1, 2, 5, 6 is better than any.

My 3, 13, 19 is used in canning.

My 16, 10, 11, 12 is what we eat.

My 20, 17, 18, 19 is not distant.

My 22, 21, 14 is a weight.

My 15, 21, 22 is a small mark.

My *whole* was said by a famous man

M. W. S.

Anagram Verse

Fi oyu lodwu veah

Eth slevo fo stircchams vlie,

Neth thiw a stircchams reath

Viceree dan evig;

Fi ouy lowdu wonk

Het etbs het ady nae od,

Peke, epek, a trisscham arthe

Eth owleh arye rothhug.

Transposition Puzzles

When the letters of the following words have been transposed, the initials read downward, will give the name of a much-used fruit.

Avldenre, a sweet-scented herb.

Lera, of noble birth.

Ttemnis, what every boy needs in winter.

Nooni, a vegetable.

Selnpa, a foreign city.

M. A. W.

Answers to Puzzles in No. 10

Enigma.—Golden Rule Sunday.

Double Acrostic.—United States.

THE BEACON is published weekly from the first Sunday of October to the first Sunday of June, by THE BEACON PRESS, INC., 16 Beacon St., Boston, Mass. Distributed also at 299 Madison Ave., New York City; 105 S. Dearborn St., Chicago; 612 Phelan Bldg., San Francisco.

Single subscription, 60 cents.

School subscription, 50 cents.

Entered at the Boston Post-Office as second-class matter. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized on September 13, 1918.

Printed in U. S. A.